

BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA

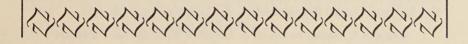
Quarterly News-Letter

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Founded in 1912, The Book Club of California is a non-profit organization of book lovers and collectors who have a special interest in Pacific Coast history, literature, and fine printing. Its chief aims are to further the interests of book collectors and to promote an understanding and appreciation of fine books.

The Club is limited to 1000 members. When vacancies exist membership is open to all who are in sympathy with its aims and whose applications are approved by the Board of Directors. Regular membership involves no responsibilities beyond payment of the annual dues. Dues date from the month of the member's election. Regular membership is \$40; Sustaining \$60; Patron \$125.

Members receive the *Quarterly News-Letter* and all parts of the current Keepsake series. They have the privilege, but not the obligation, of buying the Club publications, which are limited, as a rule, to one copy per member.

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Seventy-fifth Anniversary Dinner: Introductory Remarks

WILLIAM P. BARLOW, JR.

Welcome to the celebration of the 75th anniversary of The Book Club of California. This is not the first time the Club has celebrated its anniversary. It is, however, the first time we have celebrated our Seventy-fifth anniversary. I say that not solely for its humorous effect (which was minimal), but rather because we appear to be jumping the gun just slightly this time. In the past our anniversaries have been celebrated in December, in honor, not of the meeting which triggered the formation of the Club—a date which Oscar Lewis has described only as "one morning in 1912"—but rather in honor of the date on which the first Board of Directors of the Club was elected (or more likely, self-proclaimed): December 11, 1912.

The twentieth and twenty-fifth anniversaries of the Club were celebrated by articles in the newly established Quarterly News-Letter—a modest memento which befitted a Club in the midst of the Great Depression. The fiftieth anniversary, as many of us remember, was celebrated with a gala affair at the Palace of the Legion of Honor on December 8, 1962. Larry Powell spoke eloquently on "The Prospect Before Us," and for those of you who were not there to hear it, this talk can be found in the Spring 1963 Quarterly News-Letter, along with pictures of what some of us looked like in our youth. Finally, most of us here tonight received a copy of the broadside printed by the Allens in December 1982 entitled "On Reaching Seventy," which presented a brief essay by Oscar Lewis on the founding of the Club.

While there is hardly anyone here who has not contributed in some way to the success of the Book Club, there is time to acknowledge only a few. Of our fiftyeight Charter Members, not one survives, but ten have been members for fifty years or more and seven of them are here tonight." The first of these is Oscar Lewis. Oscar's file at the Club says he became a member in 1912. This is, however, unlikely. Oscar's name does not appear on the Charter Membership list, printed in early 1913, and in addition the Club's Constitution and By-laws clearly stated that an individual could only become a member if he was of good, moral character and over the age of twenty-one. Oscar was only nineteen in 1912. In any event, Oscar became the secretary of the Book Club in 1921, and that predates anyone else in this room. These membership restrictions must have been relaxed somewhat over the next few years—I refer, of course, to the age restriction, not the requirement of a good, moral character—because the next member of the Club was a very youthful seventeen when he was admitted in 1928, James D. Hart. Certainly the honor for the longest continuous membership from Southern California goes to Ward Ritchie, who joined in 1934. Ward may not be the first member recruited from Southern California, but he probably comes close. Although the Charter membership list includes one member from Boston, within California there is no one further afield than Pleasanton. Former President Duncan Olmsted (you will note that there is no 'a' in Olmsted) became a member in 1935. Next is Mr. William P. Wreden, who joined in 1936. We have two members here who joined in 1937 and therefore celebrate their fiftieth anniversary with the Club. Both have been former presidents of the Club, both have been involved in Book Club affairs for decades, and both share the same first name. I refer, of course, to Albert Sperisen and Albert Shumate.

Over the seventy-five-year history of the Club, there have been only twenty-five Presidents. This works out to an average term of three years, but, of course, that is not the way it happened. Since the term of Carl Wheat (who started all sorts of traditions), the typical tenure of a President has been two years—or one year in the case of those who were forced by the By-laws into mandatory Board

retirement at the end of a single term. What really brings up the average are the terms of W. R. K. Young and Alfred Sutro, who, together, directed the Club for thirty-one years. As a result of those early benign dictatorships, over half of the Presidents of the Club are still alive today, and all but one of them are here tonight. The oldest—in point of service, not in terms of age—is Jim Hart, who was our ninth President. Our thirteenth President was Albert Sperisen. He was followed in succession by Mike Harrison, Duncan Olmsted, myself, Albert Shumate, and John Borden. Unlike many similar clubs, The Book Club of California has never had any restrictions on women members. In fact, thirteen of the fifty-eight Charter Members were women, and one of the seven members of the original Board of Directors elected in 1912 was a woman. She was not there just to chair the House Committee, either; she was also on the audit and library committees. Our twentieth President, Leah Wollenberg, was actually the second of our lady presidents. The twenty-first President was Richard Dillon, and Dick was followed by our first (and only) President from Southern California, Muir Dawson. Our youngest president, who was elected at the age of thirty-three, beating, by a year, the record previously held by myself, was Gary Kurutz. Sandy Berger followed Gary. Sandy is the only one of the living ex-Presidents not here this evening; however he is alive and well and wandering around Europe someplace. Sandy was followed by our current President, Don Fleming, who is just one year younger than the Book Club itself.

Over the years the Club has been heavily dependent on its paid (if not very well paid and in some cases not even very regularly paid) secretaries. Aside from some rather vaguely described temporary and volunteer secretaries in the early years of the Club, we have had only nine secretaries since Oscar Lewis first took on the job in 1923. Only three of our past secretaries are here tonight in addition to our two current secretaries. Oscar Lewis, of course, holds down the record, with twenty-five years on the job from 1921 to 1946. Dorothy Whitnah served from 1962 to 1970, but she has since spent so much time working for the Book Club, that the only difference may be that she doesn't get a check for it any more—and Dorothy may claim that that wasn't very much of a difference. Gaye

Kelly was the secretary from 1974 to 1981, a period of great change brought about by the receipt of the McCune bequest. Our current secretaries, of course, are Shirley and Jay Sheffield. I would be most negligent if I did not mention Madeleine Rose, who, before her retirement earlier this year, served as Assistant Secretary under six of the Club's nine Secretaries.

And now my only remaining duty is to introduce our principal speaker of this evening. It would be easy enough to introduce Dr. James D. Hart by describing what he has meant to the world of literature, with his recurring editions of the Oxford Companion to American Literature, or to California reference librarians, with his A Companion to California, now in its second edition, or to scholars, with his stewardship of The Bancroft Library. All of us know about these accomplishments and more. Jim Hart was asked to speak tonight, however, because he has been a central force in The Book Club of California, and I thought it would be more appropriate to introduce him in that light. To some extent, I have already stolen some of my own introduction, since I have introduced Iim twice this evening: once as a member of the Club for almost sixty years and once as a past president. I will apologize in advance for any repetition that involves. Jim was elected to The Book Club of California in June 1928 upon the nomination of Albert Bender. Albert was, of course, known for picking out rising young stars in the arts and literature, but Jim was only seventeen at the time and one wonders how he came to the attention of that benevolent bibliophile. It might be explained by the fact that Jim's father, Julien Hart, was an early member of the Book Club, or that by then Jim had already met the Grabhorns and Valenti Angelo and was involved in his own private press. In short order, Jim was active in Club activities. Even while attending graduate school at Harvard, Jim sent a stream of letters to Oscar Lewis which indicated his growing interest in the Book Club.

For the Club's second Keepsake series in 1935, The Letters of Western Authors, Jim wrote the commentary for the Dana letter and edited material for the Twain letter. In March of 1936, Jim wrote to Oscar "I've started on a more-or-less scholarly book which will be quite a job. It is to be a comprehensive

work on American literature which the Oxford Press has arranged to publish as a complementary volume to their Companion to English Literature." 'Quite a job' was right! The book came out five years later, and hasn't stopped coming out since. Jim Hart appears on the committee for the Quarterly News-Letter beginning in 1946 and for nearly a decade thereafter. He was responsible for twisting a great many arms to obtain a great many articles for that publication. His first signed article in the Quarterly News-Letter also appeared in 1946. He was elected to the Board in 1952 and has attended the monthly Tuesday board meetings in one guise or another almost ever since. Jim was elected President of the Book Club in 1957, and was probably, at age fortysix, the youngest president to that date. If we are searching for other unique characteristics of his presidency, I could suggest that Jim was the only president to be succeeded in that office by his brother-in-law, in this case Joe Bransten.

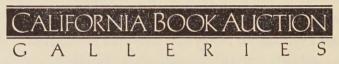
Following his two-year term as president, Jim settled in to a job which perhaps represents his greatest single service to the Book Club. Jim was Chairman of the all-important Publications Committee from 1959 to 1972, a thirteen-year period in which the Book Club published forty-two books. Now, this was not the longest term in this particular job—Albert Bender had been the Publications Committee Chairman for twenty-nine years from the inception of the Club. And Florian Shasky will this year complete a similar thirteen-year term in that position. It was, however, a very important period in the Book Club's publication program. Jim not only standardized the publication program to three books a year, but also regularized the dates of publication despite the usual problems with printers and authors—Spring, Fall, and a major book at Christmas. In addition, Jim built up an inventory of manuscripts which made his successors' jobs much easier—and the books of that period regularly sold out on publication. Jim was the author of one Book Club book: The Private Press Ventures of Samuel Lloyd Osborne and Robert Louis Stevenson, and the editor, named or otherwise, of several more.

In spite of his devotion to the books of the Club, I think the form of communication closest to Jim's heart is the exhibit postcard. Following the publication of

a checklist in the Quarterly News-Letter, Jim wrote to the Club in 1955 in an attempt to complete his collection, which then lacked eleven cards. In 1963 there were still five cards missing, and at that point the written trail ends. I hope we will hear tonight that this collection has now been completed. But complete or not, it was this collection that inspired the series of The Bancroft Library exhibition postcards. With this background, it is clear that James D. Hart is uniquely qualified to speak to us on our seventy-fifth anniversary about "The Book Club of California as a Contributor to Cultural Life."

NOTE

1. Mrs. Henry Batten, 1937; Mr. J. L. Bradley (John), 1937; *Mr. Oscar Lewis, 1921; Mr. William L. Lowe, 1935; *Mr. Duncan Olmsted, 1935; *Mr. Ward Ritchie, 1934; *Albert Shumate, M.D., 1937; *Mr. Albert Sperisen, 1937; *Mr. William P. Wreden, 1936; *Dr. James D. Hart, 1928. Members whose names are preceded by *were present at the anniversary dinner.



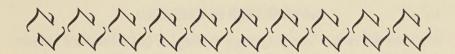
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The Book Club of California As a Contributor to Cultural Life

JAMES D. HART

The Book Club of California has good reason to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary. As California institutions go, it has had a long history. Well, long as California organizations go, but it is a mere juvenile by other standards. Its most distinguished member, Oscar Lewis, in 1912 was long since out of high school and pretty much on the eve of casting his first vote. Whether it was for Woodrow Wilson, William Howard Taft, or Roosevelt (that is, Theodore) I don't know.

It was remarkable that in 1912, only six years after the earthquake and fire that nearly destroyed San Francisco, a few cultivated local citizens had the audacity and the vision to believe that on this remote Western coast of the United States they might found a society whose purposes, according to its constitution, were "The study of letters and the promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books." This lofty undertaking was an outgrowth of the simpler idea of organizing an exhibition of fine printing and rare books for display at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, projected for opening three years hence in 1915. The Exposition's ostensible purpose was to celebrate the completion of the canal linking the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, but in large part it was designed to display the rebirth of a once-devastated San Francisco.

The idea of the exhibition and the subsequent conception of the Club seems to have come mainly from Edward Robeson Taylor, a civic-conscious polymath. Seventy-four years old in 1912, Taylor was both a physician and a lawyer, and

as if these two careers were not enough, he had gone into politics and had just completed a term as mayor of San Francisco. In addition to those diverse achievements, he had early on undertaken some printing or at least typesetting. In later life he became a published poet. Finally he achieved the ultimate glory of becoming a book collector. When the fire of April 18, 1906 began to approach Taylor's home on Webster and California streets, he had his sons dig a large hole in the backyard, which was then lined and covered with rugs, and in it Taylor buried the family valuables. Among these was a copy of the Kelmscott Chaucer. Six years after the undamaged volume was restored to his household shelves, Mayor Taylor led three other bibliophilic San Franciscans (one of them was John Henry Nash) to ask the president of the projected Exposition to include in it an exhibition of books. They were told that their proposal would be better received if it came from an organization rather than from four individuals. So the four of them went out for lunch, and a drink too, I suppose, and returned fully organized as a book collectors' club. If they did have a drink they didn't tipple so much as to call themselves one of the fancy names with which they toyed: The Gutenberg Club, The Elzevier Society, or the Aldine Club. Instead they decided on the simple descriptive name incorporating the two elements that we have always cherished: "Book" and "California."

So our club was organized, got a Board of Directors, adopted a Constitution and By-laws, enrolled a roster of fifty-eight members and took a room to serve as headquarters. It also had what was then flossily called the Committee on Programme. Within a few months of the founding that committee determined that "the Club undertake the publication of a bibliography of books dealing with the history of California and the American Pacific West from the earliest writings to the San Francisco fire of 1906." The committee pointed out quite rightly that "there is real need for a work of this kind. It will prove invaluable alike to the student and the collector of Californiana. No relatively complete bibliography of California has ever been issued." This was a bold move by a new club at a time when the frontier days of California were not far in the past.

A few members like Mayor Taylor were younger than Oscar Lewis is now and yet they could still remember the gold rush! The few libraries of California history that existed were quite new institutions. The Bancroft Library had come to the University of California only eight years before and the Sutro Library was only donated to the state that very year.

In 1914, then, there was published the first of the Club's great series of volumes now verging on number 200. It was Robert E. Cowan's A Bibliography of the History of California and the Pacific West 1510-1906. This impressive work bibliographically described 1000 titles that chronologically went back to the romantic Spanish narrative, Las Sergas de Esplandián, where the name "California" first appears. The bibliography's 356 small folio pages were printed in handsome style naturally enough by John Henry Nash and Mayor Taylor's two sons. The plainness of the bibliographical entries was counterbalanced by specially-designed initials depicting California poppies printed in an orange-red as they twined around the capital letters.

The new Club with a limited membership was really daring to publish this remarkable cultural contribution, an imposing and quite scholarly work in an edition of 250 copies priced at the substantial sum of \$20.00. Today when we have about ten times as many members we commonly issue only twice as many copies and at prices less than the equivalent of twenty 1914 dollars. It was no wonder that hard sales techniques were needed. So it was that Edward Robeson Taylor, the club's president, was led to write to James D. Phelan, his predecessor as Mayor of San Francisco: "The work is one that must directly appeal to Californians. . . . It is thought that you would be particularly interested; and in order to afford you an opportunity to inspect the book leisurely and critically, a copy is being sent to your residence." Former mayor, now Senator Phelan must have been rather taken aback to find the bulky unordered book in his mailbox. He must have felt even further put upon when he simultaneously received a letter from the Club urging him to change from his regular \$10.00 annual membership to become a life member by paying \$250.00. If Phelan did so, he

made a bad investment for he died in 1930, that is, only \$160.00 worth of regular membership later. At any event, Phelan did buy the Cowan Bibliography, as did nearly 150 other members during the next two years.

The Club thus started its great publications program in a daring way, not simply reprinting some classic such as a work by Shakespeare or the ever-reissued Sonnets from the Portuguese nor simply by adding another volume to the tradition of fine printing in the manner of Morris or of Cobden-Sanderson, but by blazing a trail into the almost heretofore unknown wilderness of the regional history of the Far West. It was thus a pioneer in opening up the subject of serious study of California. In this it has been followed by any number of other scholars and publishers, though some time elapsed before the impact of its novel idea was felt. Indeed, even the Club did not immediately follow the precedent it had set, perhaps in part because more than 100 copies of Cowan's work still lingered on the shelves in 1916. In 1921, seven years after issuing the Cowan bibliography, the Club made its second tentative foray into the field of Californiana by having the Grabhorns print a slim memoir of gold rush days, Samuel Williams' The City of the Golden Gate. Not until another seven years passed, that is in 1928, did the Club print another work of California interest. It was Around the Horn in '49, the journal of the Hartford Union Mining and Trading Company. And that book was followed in the next decade by only four other works in this category. There were thus but seven Californiana titles among the more than fifty books issued by the Club during its first quarter century of publication.

However, California became the exclusive subject of the series of annual Keepsakes, created during the Depression as a give-away to attract and to hold members. Beginning in 1933, year in and year out, the Club has issued annually anywhere from four to twelve leaflets on remarkably diverse topics of Californiana, including treatments of the state's mining towns, its literature, its theater, humor, great bonanza banquets, transportation, wineries, resorts, music, lighthouses, mining, mountain passes, magazines, and other subjects, including depiction of California scenes by paint and by camera.

The keepsakes, though usually comprised of thin leaflets, and issued without charge, are as handsomely printed as the Club's books, and they are equally substantial when placed in their bound containers. Their excellent typography and illustration, like the printing and pictures of all the Club's publications, are in accord with the purpose stated in the Club's constitution: "The promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books." Such dedication has been a primary element of the Club's cultural contribution.

Throughout its history the Club has always concentrated on fine printing. Not only has it been more clearly dedicated to this endeavor than any other bibliophiles' club in the United States but it has been a more consistent publisher of books and pamphlets, all of them of high typographic quality. I know of no other bookish organization in the United States that has printed nearly 200 books during the past seventy-five years as well as issuing annually a series of Keepsake booklets, all of them significant for their typography as well as for their text. Nor do I know of another club whose simple though numerous postcard announcements are themselves examples of fine design by printers of distinction. Indeed, in one instance a great printer (William Everson) dampened the U.S. postal stock so as to get a firm black impression from his press.

San Francisco in particular and California in general are esteemed as a major locale of great modern printing in some large part because the Book Club has sponsored such work. It has consistently eschewed merely capable presswork and has steadfastly concentrated on obtaining the best in its region. The Club's first twelve publications, except for one example, came from John Henry Nash or from his erstwhile partners, Taylor and Taylor. Their accomplishments were such that they even received a compliment from Cobden-Sanderson who declared that the volume for 1919, Nash's Kasidah, had a title page "beautifully balanced and enriched with color and design." When the young Grabhorn brothers arrived in San Francisco in 1920, the Club was there to give them a helping hand. Only a few months after their arrival, they were commissioned to print the first of their long, long series of publications of Club volumes. The Club did not make the Grabhorns great printers, although the Grabhorns made one great

book after another for the Club, but the Club's business did help to ensure that the Grabhorns could survive and could go their own way with relatively little need to defer to commercialism. What the Club did for the Grabhorns it also did for others. Indeed it created an ethos in which fine printers could not only count on some ongoing financial assistance through commissions but they were helped by the recognition that showed they were appreciated.

There is not one fine California printer who has not been commissioned by the Club to do some project. Among the printers thus helpfully patronized by the Club were the Windsor Press of James and Cecil Johnson, Johnsk & Seeger, The Ward Ritchie Press, The Plantin Press of Saul and Lillian Marks, Wilder Bentley's Archetype Press, The Allen Press, Jack Stauffacher's Greenwood Press, The Castle Press of Grant Dahlstrom, Lawton Kennedy's Press, Albert Sperisen's Black Vine Press, Adrian Wilson's Press in Tuscany Alley, the press of Mallette Dean, Arlen Philpott at his Tamal Land Press, Andrew Hoyem, both in association with Bob Grabborn and later at his own Arion Press, Don Greame Kelley at his Feathered Serpent Press, Sherwood Grover at his Grace Hoper Press, Patrick Reagh of Los Angeles and, coming down to more recent times, the Yolla Bolly Press, Will Powers and Wesley Tanner, Peter Koch, and the Artichoke Press of Jonathan Clark. It is an impressive list of local presses to which could even be added a number of others, including amateur printers who were in large part attracted to their hobby or encouraged in its pursuit by the purposes of the Book Club. So far as I know, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, cities larger and older than San Francisco, have neither so many fine presses today nor have they had them in the past. And none of these cities has a book club that so actively nurtures its fine printers.

The Club has not only created works of great typographical distinction but it has made available to its members monuments of typographic history, all of them representing volumes of the past, by issuing so called Leaf Books, in each of which is incorporated a page from some great typographically or textually significant work about which the Club has commissioned an illuminating historical essay. In this way members have been able to obtain examples of the

printing of Aldus Pius Manutius, of the Nuremberg Chronicle, the King James Bible, Caxton's Polychronicon, Benjamin Franklin, Wynkyn de Worde's Golden Legend, and the imposing polyglot text of the Complutensian Bible.

All of these publications had informative text and some of them significant scholarship by prominent scholars of the region like Charles Muscatine's tracing of more than four hundred years of the publications of Chaucer, or the account of Holinshed's Chronicles and its influence on Shakespeare, by Professor Stephen Booth, or the ingenious comparison of Dr. Johnson and Noah Webster by Professor David Littlejohn, illustrated by a matched pair of original leaves from their respective dictionaries.

Of course, the Club also published fine original scholarship in the basic texts or in the introductions to its numerous other works, many on California like Neal Harlow's Maps of San Francisco Bay, and Franklin Walker's collection of the letters of Frank Norris and his original account of early Carmel, The Seacoast of Bohemia. Or one might think of George Stewart's introduction to several early California works, and Robert Harlan's writings on California printers and publishers. And then there are innumerable fine historical and critical texts by Oscar Lewis. The Club has reached farther afield too for scholarly contributions that include Eric Partridge's commentary on The Spectator, Percy Muir's essay on the popular Catnatch Press of nineteenth-century England, Stanley Morison on typographic design, John Dreyfus on Cobden-Sanderson, and Colin Franklin on the pictorial art of aquatint.

Occasionally the Club has been the first publisher in book form (and sometimes the first in any form) of literary works by distinguished authors, including such widely disparate ones as Mark Twain and Oscar Wilde.

The Club has also contributed to the cultural life in printing works by important creative authors of belles lettres, mainly Californian. In this it has generally looked backward by emphasizing the writings of local figures of an earlier day, like Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Mary Austin, George Sterling, and Mark Twain in his Nevada and California period. We have been the

exclusive publishers of the letters of Frank Norris. We have a fine record for literature in that there is hardly an important California writer of an earlier era whom we have failed to publish posthumously, for our authors even include Dan de Quille, Prentice Mulford, and Clarence King.

However, although the Club has published some prose and a small volume of poems by Robinson Jeffers, and in their time some fiction by Gertrude Atherton and an occasional poem by Josephine Miles and Yvor Winters, virtually all of the Club's concern with local writers has been antiquarian in tone.

Back in 1925 during its early days, the Club did publish an anthology of contemporary California poets titled Continent's End that included Genevieve Taggard, Jeffers, Maxwell Anderson, and Leonard Bacon among others, but on the whole their verses were relatively conventional and most of them represented ideas and attitudes that were rather commonplace. None of the Club's authors was on the cutting edge. Even in their time it did not publish more radical writers like Jack London or Upton Sinclair. In later years about all that we have done in relation to leading contemporary California authors has been to include three or four in keepsake leaflets.

We have done no better during recent years. When one thinks of contemporary California writers of distinction one thinks of a whole list of authors who have not appeared under our imprimatur. They may not be well known to most Book Club members or, if known, may not be the authors to whom many members would turn, but they are authors of great consequence in contemporary California. Almost at random, and certainly without any order I might name Wright Morris, Joan Didion, Evan Connell, Alice Adams, Alice Walker, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Diane Johnson, Maxine Hong Kingston, James D. Houston, and Wallace Stegner.

Perhaps by the time we celebrate our centennial we will have printed some works by these or other contemporary California authors, but as I look back on our first seventy-five years I find that in every other respect we have made a clear contribution to the cultural life not only of our place but of our time. We can

take pride in everything we have done for I know of nothing that is not good and if we have omitted to do some things, we can yet do them.

The Book Club of California is a special sort of institution and relatively few people who contribute in other ways to San Francisco's cultural life, or that of California, let alone of the nation or the world at large, are aware of us. There are plenty of persons in our city who are not aware of us, though they go to the San Francisco Symphony, attend the ballet, regularly visit our fine arts museums, stand or sit during the long season of local opera, or read the books published by the North Point Press, City Lights Press, Black Sparrow, and other specialized or avante-garde regional publishers. And there are some aspects of local culture of which we are probably not fully aware. But what we have done has been well done and has had its own large contingent of one thousand supporters with others eager to join. We can rightly say that we have made significant contributions to the cultural life, not only of our place but of our time.

Edward Robeson Taylor, Albert M. Bender, and the other founders of the Club are long since gone. So too are gone the presses of John Henry Nash, Taylor & Taylor, and the Grabhorn brothers. A few texts of some of the Club's early books by George Sterling, Ina Coolbrith, and Rabindranath Tagore are no longer vital but the Club that issued them is as vigorous as ever. The Club continues to contribute significantly to the art and history of the book, to local literature and history, and to extensions of the other purposes for which it was created. In its quiet way The Book Club of California has been and continues to be a significant cultural force, not only in its locale but in the century that it has graced.

President's Page

The seventy-fifth anniversary of The Book Club of California is a milestone in the history of this organization and our celebration of the event may serve as a reminder of the Club's cultural heritage. The growth and success of the Club have been eloquently set forth in our Fall publication, *The First 75 Years* (given to our members in celebration of our anniversary) and in James D. Hart's narrative, included in this issue of the *Quarterly News-Letter*.

Our happy reflections on past accomplishments and achievements should be linked to the new challenges; indeed, we appear to be at a stage that will require a decision on the relocation of The Book Club's facilities. The lease on the Club's Sutter Street rooms expires in November 1988 and officers and members of the Board of Directors have already been actively engaged in researching potential sites for our offices, library and exhibition space. Jerry Cole, Vice-President of the Club, will lead a task force that will review the issue of space requirements and recommend a plan of action. Progress reports will appear in the *Quarterly News-Letter*, and through special announcements.

Mr. Cole was elected to the Board of Directors at the October annual meeting and joins other new Board members John Class, John Crichton, James Pepper, and Albert Sperisen, as the "class of 1987," with terms extending to 1990. We welcome these members to the Board and look forward to their participation in Club business. Robert D. Harlan is the new Secretary, a position that developed from the By-laws revision process, ongoing these past two years.

Gary Kurutz, a former President of the Club, has been appointed Chairman of the Publications Committee. He is eager to hear about potential manuscripts and ideas for books and topics for future keepsakes. The Club's Winter book, *Texas Argonauts: Isaac H. Duval and the California Gold Rush*, was suggested by a member. Richard H. Dillon has edited the text, which has been enhanced with original paintings commissioned of Texan Charles Shaw.

This innovation in our publishing program is further evidence of our commitment to supporting the book arts with high standards. Recognition of these efforts was demonstrated in a recent citation of one of our books—

The Bookplates of Eric Gill was selected by the British Printing Industries Association and the Book Trust (formerly the National Book League) for the British Book Design and Production Exhibition, 1987. Our book has been displayed at the Frankfurt Book Fair and in London. This title was also reviewed favorably in The Book Collector.

We welcome comments and suggestions relating to our publications and on any issues relating to the activities of The Book Club. Members will have an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions in response to a brief questionnaire that is being developed. It will address the topics of our publications program, membership, public programs, and related areas. Response to this request for information is voluntary, but we hope members will answer the inquiry.

In the process of moving toward our centenary, we shall draw upon the traditions of the Club in forming our new priorities. Interaction and participation of directors, officers and members of the Club will insure our organization's continued vitality. Florian J. Shasky

President

Elected to Membership

The two classifications above regular membership at \$40 per year are Patron membership at \$125 per year and Sustaining membership at \$60 per year.

New Patron Member		
Thomas S. Fowler	San Mateo	Paul Birkel
NT C N. 1		
New Sustaining Members		
Brian & Gwyneth Booth	Portland, or	Ronald R. Randall
Michael B. Cartmell	San Francisco	Robert D. Haines, Jr.
Lawrence R. Prast	San Francisco	Richard Hilkert
New Regular Members		
Mrs. Mildred Albronda	San Francisco	S. Gale Herrick
Susan M. Allen	Claremont	J. W. Sheffield
Frank Sawyer Bayley	San Francisco	Peter Stansky
Deborah Benson	W. Cornwall, CT	Jacob Zeitlin
Scott Brake	Newport Beach	Robert D. Haines, Jr.
James Henry Chapman	Oakland	Richard Dillon
Maureen C. Cummins	Staten Island, NY	Toni Zwicker
Harry Abbott Donlevy	Richmond	Jeffrey Thomas
Gretchen S. B. Falk	San Rafael	Richard Hilkert
John Patrick Ford	San Diego	Jeffrey Thomas
Robert F. Hanson	Bradenton, FL	Alan Dietch
Dr. & Mrs. Philip Heersema	San Francisco	Madeleine S. Rose
David Highsmith	San Francisco	Michael Nielsen
Charles M. Hobson, III	San Francisco	Wesley B. Tanner
Robert M. Kafka, Jr.	Santa Monica	D. Steven Corey
Susan S. Ketcham	San Francisco	James Linden
Mead B. Kibbey	Sacramento	Robert B. Gordon, MD
Katherine Mather Littell	Twain Harte	Jeffrey Thomas
Michael W. Nunn	Riverside	James E. Lorson

David S. Ogden	Hayward	Paul Ogden
Noel Peattie	Winters	Richard Hilkert
Stuart Robinson	Balboa Island	James E. Lorson
Klaus-Ullrich Rötzscher	San Francisco	James Linden
Jean Sherrell	San Francisco	D. Steven Corey

PREMIUM DUES NOTICE

The following Member has transferred from Sustaining to Patron Membership status (\$125):

Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy C. Cole San Francisco

Book Reviews

American Metal Typefaces of the Twentieth Century. Mac McGrew. New Rochelle, NY: The Myriade Press, Inc., 1987. Preliminary Edition. 395pp. \$35 (plus \$1.19 postage; New York State residents add sales tax).

The Myriade Press (7 Stony Run, New Rochelle, New York 10804) has very kindly provided us with a review copy of the "Preliminary Edition" of its comprehensive American Typefaces of the Twentieth Century, issued for the purpose of soliciting information from type enthusiasts who might supply any missing typefaces (together with sizes issued and the manufacturer as well as designer). We noted a few missing typefaces, but we are unable to supply the sizes cut (perhaps other members will be able to do so!). The missing ones noted are: Monotype Janson; William Dana Orcott's Humanistic type (while the Monotype "Laurentian" is listed, it was considerably modified from Orcott's design in order to fit caps to lowercase; the original Humanistic was cut for Harvard University Press by American Typefounders); finally, Goudy's Tory is not listed, although this is an understandable omission, since that typeface—as well as many others—was destroyed by fire. We highly recommend this important reference volume to all type collectors.

Gifts & Acquisitions

From member Sherrill Halbert we have received an incomplete run (sixteen issues) of Far Afield, printed by the Arundo Press, "Amateur Printing & Publishing Project of Frederick Folger Thomas, Jr., Berkeley, California," to complete our own collection. These small booklets were always more than simple amateur printing: Number 8 (Spring 1954), for example, has an article by Edward DeWitt Taylor, Frederic Goudy Comes to the Fair, reproducing the two versions of Goudy's pressmark for Taylor & Taylor, one in the usual

red-orange and the other, which was rarely used, in blue. Our thanks to Mr. Halbert.

Albert Sperisen

And from our most ardent contributor, Toni Savage of Leicester, England, we have received his latest Phoenix Broadsides, numbers 306-310, all delightfully printed on various papers with amusing poems from five different poets, and wrapped with a note from Toni—"with Love & Peace." A.S.

The Club has received another unusual typeface catalogue prepared by member Harold Berliner at his typefoundry in Nevada City. He has titled this fascinating printed booklet "The Right Size," and uses a poem by William Butler Yeats to demonstrate various typefaces, repeating the poem sixteen times on successive pages in as many types, with facing pages displaying the roman and italic. This novel concept visually illustrates his thesis beautifully but, unfortunately, it makes as much a pitch for photo-copy type as it does for hot metal. Nonetheless, this is an interesting presentation and copies may be had by writing the typefoundry, 224 Main Street, Nevada City, California 95959. And by the way, Berliner has announced three "exotic" typefaces named Prumyslava, Poltawski, and Fabritius, specimens of which may be had by writing.

Member David Forbes, who recently returned from a trip to Australia, has given the Club a booklet entitled *The Literature of Australian Private Presses and Fine Printing: a Bibliography*, compiled by Geoffrey Farmer as Number 26 in the Studies in Australian Bibliography series, published by the Book Collectors' Society of Australia. With gifts we have received in the past few years from a few of the new private presses in Australia, this bibliography is an excellent addition to our reference collection—and our thanks to David. A.S.

As a companion volume to Fine Printing, the San Francisco Tradition, by James D. Hart, printed from his 1983 talk in the scheduled series of Englehard Lectures given at the Library of Congress (see Quarterly News-Letter No. 4, Autumn 1985), Ward Ritchie has presented the Club with a copy of his own Englehard Lecture, Fine Printing, the Los Angeles Tradition, 1985. This talk was printed quite handsomely for the Library of Congress by Patrick Reagh in Glendale, in an edition of 1500 copies, designed by Scott Freutel and bound by Cardoza-James in San Francisco. As a fitting review of fine printing on the Pacific Coast, both volumes will be housed in a slipcase (Editor's note: Albert Sperisen has made a lovely slipcase for this purpose) for shelving in our library. Our sincere thanks to Ward.

The Club has again been extremely fortunate in acquiring another rare book on lithography. This book amounts to the first treatise on "how to do it"—in spite of the fact that Senefelder (the father of lithography) published his

own manual, a "Complete Course in Lithography" (1818). Senefelder was careful not to divulge his secrets to foreigners, wanting, of course, to control his process. The French government wanted the use of this new autographic process, and so Raucourt de Charleville published a manual which was to have considerable influence in both France and England. Translated by C. Hullmandel, the English edition is Manual of Lithography, or Memoir of the Lithographical Experiments Made in Paris at the Royal School of Roads and Bridges, London, 1820. While our copy is not the finest, it is so rare and important that we had to overlook its condition. Our translation contains two original lithograph plates showing presses and necessary appliances; both plates are dated 1819.

We have received an announcement from a new California private press—The Posthorn Press, being the private press of John F. Dingman of Ocean-side. Mr. Dingman notes that he is retired and an amateur printer, and in his announcement he mentions three books he has printed and published. The first is *Alexander Anderson* (1775–1800), whom he calls the American "Bewick," having illustrated "over 600 publications and produced some 10,000 blocks." Another is a poem by Jack London, *The Way of War*. And finally, his own *A Fleuron Potpourri*. Mr. Dingman has applied for membership in the Club.

We are indeed grateful to member Joanne Sonnichsen for making a hand-some box to house the Club's copy of the Aid & Comfort Artists Portfolio (see *Quarterly News-Letter* Number 3, Summer 1987). We understand copies of the Portfolio are still available at \$175, and proceeds benefit charities helping local Aids victims. Contact Aid & Comfort, 333 Hayes St., Suite 111, San Francisco 94102, or call the Zuni Cafe 552-2540 and ask for Carol. Thanks again to Mrs. Sonnichsen.

Our thanks to member David Graham and his friend John Carpenter for their gift (quite some time ago!) of Oscar Lewis' own copy of *Continent's End*. This is an important association item, not only because it was Oscar's, but because he had it enhanced with the addition of the signatures of many of the poets. We are indeed grateful to Messrs. Graham and Carpenter for this splendid addition to our collections.

Member Daniel Blum was kind enough to send us *Durham Bookbinders and Booksellers* 1660-1760, Oxford Bibliographical Society Occasional Publication No. 19, published by the Bodleian Library, 1986, for which many thanks.

The Club is pleased by a gift from The Roxburghe Club of San Francisco—a copy of A Fragment from Commonplace Book Seven: Work in Progress by Sherwood Grover (1913–1986) for his Grace Hoper Press (Roxburghe Club of

San Francisco, 1987). "Commonplace Notes" by Felicia Rice. 26pp, printed in two colors throughout, with page 10 containing three colors. The book is bound in square-backed blue wrappers, printed in black, and measures 115%" tall by 81%" wide. 225 copies.

As Felicia Rice notes in her moving introduction to this work, Sherwood Grover had typeset and fully completed printing, folding, and collating ten of the twenty-two quotations into one signature of *Commonplace Book Seven*. A second signature required only the second (red) color to be complete. When Grover suddenly died in July, 1986, the ink was on the press and the forms left standing. These sheets have now been completed by Felicia Rice at her Moving Parts Press and issued by the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco as its ninth official publication.

This beautifully completed fragment, the final work of the Grace Hoper Press, is indeed a tribute to Sherwood Grover, the man, and to his accomplishment as printer and craftsman.

This book is available at the price of \$35.00 per copy. California residents please add appropriate Sales Tax. To order, write James Linden, 1803 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California 94115.

Printer-member W. Thomas Taylor has sent us very attractive broadsides he designed and printed to announce recent lectures at Southern Methodist University, "The Book Club of Texas" by Stanley Marcus, and "Return to the Heartland—Reminiscences of Texas Books & Book People" by Lawrence Clark Powell. We are delighted to have these excellent examples of his work.

Serendipity

At an auction held at the Swann Galleries, Inc., New York, on September 17, a number of Club publications were offered and it is a pleasure to report that all brought substantial prices—further evidence that such works are valued at places far removed from California. Here are a few of the titles offered, years of publication, and the sums they brought: The Book of Ruth (1927), \$165; An Original Leaf from the Polycronicon (1938), \$193; Fire and Other Poems, D. H. Lawrence (1940), \$193; Journal of a Cruise to California, William H. Meyers (1955), \$121; Maps of San Francisco Bay, Neal Harlow (1950), \$121; and The Drawings of John Woodhouse Audubon (1957), \$131.

Dorothy Abbe's exhibit of The Graphic Work of W. A. Dwiggins closed at the San Francisco Public Library on October 24, after a very successful twomonth run. There were many visitors from far and near who took advantage of the unique opportunity to view the work of this great American designer. Dorothy Abbe mounted a wonderful exhibit which included many items from her own collection, and from those of the Hingham Public and Boston Public libraries. We extend our thanks once again to Dorothy for all her work in arranging the exhibition, and to The Book Club of California whose support was vital to bringing it to San Francisco.

Johanna Goldschmid Special Collections, San Francisco Public Library

Gloria Francis of the Detroit Public Library Rare Books Room reports that an exhibit was put on there at the end of September in honor of our Seventy-fifth Anniversary. A number of Book Club publications from their collection were on display. Our thanks to Ms. Francis and the Detroit Library for commemorating this important milestone in The Club's history.

Members please note: The Book Club maintains a master calendar of bookish activities, for the purpose of assisting local book people in avoiding conflicts when scheduling their events. Please do check with us before scheduling your activities—give us a call at 781-7532, and ask for the "clearinghouse calendar."

CORRECTION: There is an error in the Quarterly News-Letter, Volume LII, Number 4 (Autumn, 1987), in R. S. Speck's review of What the Fish Saw, published by Twowindows Press. The hand-colored drawings by artist Nancy Davis are in Nightmare of the Violins, not What the Fish Saw.

Los Angeles' Man about Fine Letters

In early September I was sitting with one of my oldest friends, Jacob Zeitlin, making plans for the celebration of his 85th birthday on November 5. He was not well, having just experienced open-heart surgery, but Jake was hopeful and as always bursting with ideas and with stories gathered from his long association with books and authors. Then, days later, the word came that his heart had failed him. This brought back a flood of memories of this man who was the catalyst around which "a small renaissance, Southern California style" developed in the 1930s.

I remember some 60 years ago when he was a struggling, though visionary, book peddler who carried a valise full of his wares to show to lawyers, doctors and movie producers who might be interested—and to the impecunious as well. He finally found a foothold in a converted hallway on Hope Street just around the corner from 6th Street, then the bookseller's row of Los Angeles. When the opportunity came he moved to 6th Street in slightly larger quarters, at 705½. Lloyd Wright designed the shop and made it attractive, as all of Jake's shops were to be. It was more than the half-shop the address indicated; though not large, it accommodated a few shelves of those

fine press books for which the 1920s were renowned, new English first editions which few local bookstores had and a small gallery where he gave many local artists their first showing.

Somehow, Jake attracted creative people. His shop was a magnet to them. His own enthusiasm, his innovative mind and his drive to start things resulted in many cooperative ventures with his friends. He spent almost as much time on these ventures as he did selling books.

With so many young writers and artists hanging around, it was only natural for Jake to suggest that they start a magazine in which they could sound off and offer their opinions. Obviously it was named Opinion and with each of the sponsors helping cover the printing costs, it was issued for a year or so beginning in 1929. In addition to Jake, such writers as Louis Adamic, Walter Arensburg, Merle Armitage, Gustave Boehme, Will Connell, Phil Townsend Hanna, Carl Haverlin, Paul Jordan-Smith, Carey McWilliams, Joseph Pijoan, W. W. Robinson, Jose Rodriguez, Sidney King Russell, Lloyd Wright and Judge Leon R. Yankowich made up this Los Angeles aristocracy. Its objective, as stated, was "for the sole purpose of giving currency to pure passions and prejudices, intelligently written on subjects of pertinence and interest. It is inspired by no revolutionary motives, scorns all crusades and reforms, and denies itself equally to the sophistical attitudes of obvious poseurs."

Jake, as a young man growing up in Texas, had been writing poetry when he was discovered and encouraged by Carl Sandburg. After his emigration to California, he gathered together a number of these poems; his friends, Theodore Lilienthal and Leon Gelber, who had a book shop in San Francisco, published the book, "For Whispers and Chants," under the imprint of the Lantern Press in 1927. Ed and Bob Grabhorn printed it, Valenti Angelo illustrated it and Sandburg wrote a short foreword, saying:

"Now we have the boy, the young man, Jake Zeitlin, stepping forth as a poet. Dreams and impressions come to him and they take word shapes, and he must put down the words. He has the value, the merit, and quality, that accompany the inevitable."

In the back of his mind Jake also harbored the desire to publish an occasional book. The opportunity came when Margaret Eyer Wilbur translated an early book about Los Angeles by an Austrian visitor, Ludwig Louis Salvator. She agreed to partly subsidize it; Bruce McCallister printed it and Grant Dahlstrom helped with the design.

Meanwhile, before that book was finished, Sandburg had included a couple of manuscript poems in his occasional letters to Jake. I was learning how to set type at Frank Wiggins Trade School and Jake showed me Sandburg's poem "Soo Line Sonata," asking if I'd like to print it for him. Naturally, I was eager and set it in type only to be disappointed when Sand-

burg told Jake that he did not want it printed but that he could publish the other poem. "M'Liss and Louie," which Jake sold for the inflated price of \$1.00. These were the first things I printed and the first poetry that Jake published.

In the next few years he became more and more involved in publishing and formed the Primavera Press using the fawn as his imprint. To relieve himself of some time-consuming details, in 1933 he asked Phil Townsend Hanna to join him as the press editor, and me to handle production. Later McWilliams, Lawrence Clark Powell and Cornelis Groenewegen were added to the staff. The press continued to publish some fairly distinguished books until 1936 when the Great Depression took its toll.

Jake was always keenly interested in "fine printing." In his book shop he had many examples of the work of the best contemporary printers of the United States and Europe and was insistent on having his catalogues well-designed and printed. I remember quite clearly a minor masterpiece, hand set and printed for him by Saul Marks. Unfortunately, in trying to achieve complete perfection, Saul took so long in production that most of the books had been sold before it was issued. Yet Jake could not be other than happy with it.

Jake's interest also extended to the realm of art and he mingled with many productive people such as Fletcher Martin, Paul Landacre, Barse Miller and Alexander Brook. In all of his book shops he included a gallery and his taste seemed perspicacious in his selection of later famous but at the time unknown artists such as Edward Weston, Rockwell Kent and Kathe Kollwitz.

Jake's outside activities didn't quite submerge his book shop. It prospered enough for a move across 6th Street and down a block, where Wright again created a charming atmosphere and a much larger shop, also with a gallery. Jake was quite accustomed to adulating females dropping it, but he was not prepared for the appearance one day of a wholesome looking, down-to-earth Dutch school teacher from Kansas, who was looking for a summer job. Jake confided to me that Josephine Ver Brugge was the girl he'd like to marry, and he did.

Jake's next move was to the carriage house of the old Earl home at Wilshire and Carondelet. The red brick building, smothered in ivy, had basic charm. Walter Berman created a warm interior with rough planking. Since there were quarters on the second floor, the Zeitlins were able to both live and work there—and breed children.

The Carondelet shop was a charmer but the property belonged to the neighboring Otis Art Institute. Otis wanted to expand and planned to tear down both the Earl home and the carriage house. The Zeitlins were told to move.

They found a huge red barn that Ernest Pascal had built on La Cienega

Boulevard, which met Jake's requirements for charm and individuality. Here they moved the shop, which has prospered under Josephine's competent management, allowing Jake the freedom to indulge in creative bookselling and occasional publishing. During those years Jake had developed from a pleasant local bookseller into an international authority in many fields of books. He was helpful in accumulating the Elmer Belt Leonardo da Vinci Library at UCLA, he arranged the great Honeyman sale of western materials at Sothebys in London and more recently arranged the sale of a group of early illuminated manuscripts to the Getty Museum for \$30 million.

He leaves a legacy of accomplishment in many fields and recollections recorded in an oral history at UCLA that will serve well future historians delving into the cultural history of Los Angeles.

Ward Ritchie

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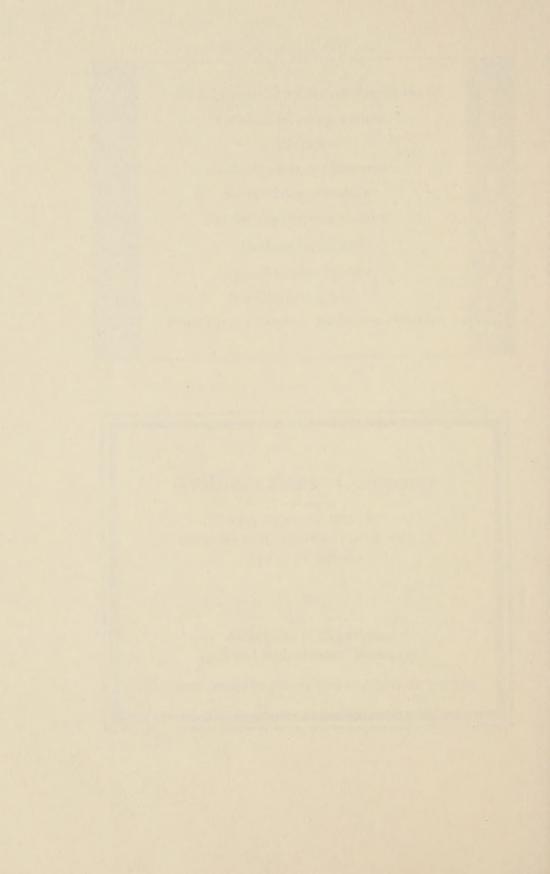
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